DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 257 EA 021 910

AUTHOR	English, Fenwick W.; Hill, John C.
TITLE	Restructuring: The Principal and Curriculum Change. A Report of the NASSP Curriculum Council.
INSTITUTION	National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va.
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	30p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091 (Stock No. 2109008, $3.00 quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Design; *Curriculum Development; Educational Change; *Educational Innovation; *Principals; *School Restructuring; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

Different groups have different ideas about how schools should be restructured. Although decision-making and control are increasingly shared with other groups, the principal remains most accountable. Innovative leadership styles, such as the inhouse critic and the master generalist, address issues of curriculum totality, function, and goals. Restructuring education involves abandoning some structural metaphors, such as the linear staircase model, and considering alternatives. The nonlinear, holistic spider web model requires radical structural changes in time/space relationships, scheduling, and teaching practices. This report also includes a developmental staging plan for school restructuring and scenarios of decision-making situations encountered by principals. (42 references) (LMI)

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The Principal and Curriculum Change

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Restructuring: The Principal And Curriculum Change

A Report of the NASSP Curriculum Council

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SCHOOLS MUST BE RESTRUCTURED. The new clarion call of American education peals crisply across the educational landscape as we enter the 1990s.

Like so many other watchwords of the past, *restructuring* means different things to different people. Teacher unions see empowerment as the driving force behind restructuring, whereby the perceived authority of the principal is radically altered to give teachers a larger share of decision-making leverage.

Legislative reformers view restructuring as a way to deflate what they see as the bloated bureaucracy of schools. Restructuring is a method of reducing the administrative "blob," shortening lines of communication, and improving the capability of schools to be more responsive to their clientele.

Think tank experts hope that restructuring will make schools more socially relevant. Some even believe that schools need only a titular head, such as a dean; faculty members will do the actual altering. Professors are fond of this model. Unfortunately, the very different governance structure of elementary/secondary education—as opposed to higher education—makes this approach impractical.

School board members talk about restructuring as a device to "open up" schools to their communities, to give parents more stake in governance, and to ensure that school services are well utilized.

The principal stands at the apex of this process.

Many current reformers forget how and why the principalship was created in the first place. If the principalship were abolished tomorrow, it would shortly have to be recreated. The same forces that originally led to its establishment are still with us today. A brief look backward will reveal why principals are still essential for school leadership and change.

The word *principal* comes from the Latin *principalis*, meaning "first in rank, station, or esteem." The school principalship was a well-understood concept in the America of the eighteenth century (Williams, 1957). The principal was the *principal teacher* of the school.

The early principal teacher had fairly routine responsibilities. He or she was charged with providing basic resources for the school, for maintaining cleanliness, for monitoring the attendance of pupils and teachers, and for handling the enrollment and placement of students.

As schools grew in size, however, with many teachers under one roof, tasks such as school scheduling, assignment of personnel, and curriculum development assumed greater and greater importance. The creation in 1848 of the Quincy Graded School saw *courses of study* replace older notions of organizing the content of education programs. Courses of study required close coordination between teachers so that programs fit together to form some sort of whole. This coordinating function placed new demands on principals, demands that were evident to early writers in school administration.

Potter and Emerson, for example, wrote in *The School and the Schoolmaster* (1858), "In every department of public service, a rigid system of accountability is looked upon as the main secret for securing efficiency and fidelity; and in order to maintain such a system, principals are held responsible for the proceedings of their subordinates" (p. 256).

That the school principal would provide a system of accountability became

deeply ingrained in the expectations for the role. In a dispute over his role as high school principal in South Orange, N.J., in 1887, a Mr. J. B. Maxwell (Foster, 1930) noted, "I must repeat what I said in a communication to the Board made in 1885. It is a mistake in a school of this size to confine the Principal to a single classroom, and thus prevent him from spending some time in the other rooms in order that he may inspect the work of his teachers" (p. 112).

The idea that an effective principal is one who inspects is an important historical function of supervision. It is not an accident that school laws around the turn of the century spoke of "supervising principals" (Schaeffer, 1911, p. 66). The inspection function was largely discarded with the work of Francis Parker, however, and later educational writers sought to distinguish "inspection" from "supervision" (Cubberley, 1929, p. 926).

It is a generally accepted rule of management that groups cannot be held accountable for anything. Individuals, on the other hand, can be held accountable, chiefly by a division of work and a unity of command (Koontz and O'Donnell, 1964).

The pressure exerted on school principals to supervise has dramatically increased in recent years with the introduction of new laws and regulations by the respective states. These laws make the principal directly responsible for curriculum and instruction by requiring that certain school reports be submitted directly to the state education department. Indeed, when test scores are publicly reported school by school, it is the principal, not the faculty, who must speak on behalf of the school.

Despite the talk about empowerment by teacher unions and some reformers, it is highly unlikely that these constituencies will ever be held legally accountable for the quality of education in schools. The principal remains the first—and final—focus of accountability in schools. With this tradition firmly in mind, we will look at the challenges principals face today in school restructuring and, specifically, in curriculum change.

The Person and the Problem

The Shifting Definition of the Task

The principal is legally, formally, and practically in control of the school, but it is a kind of control in late twentieth-century America that has peculiar connotations. No longer is the principal the sole visionary who defines what is "good or proper" in the school curriculum. Few secondary principals would even consider themselves qualified to define a curriculum in every subject area of a modern secondary school.

This was not true in the past. Take, for example, the recollections of William Mowry (1908) of Providence, R. I. After a fine career in public secondary education, Mowry decided to launch a new, private high school. He tells us that while the school was in construction during 1874-75, "my mind was greatly absorbed in studying the question of the true course of studies for a secondary school."

Then, in anticipation of some writers today (e.g., Boyer, 1983), he asked:

> Should there be one course for all, or two separate courses, one to prepare for college, the other to prepare for business? What is the proper balance of studies? What is the proper place for the mathematics? How much science study should be introduced? How much attention should be given to the study of our own language and literature? Should all the boys be required to study Latin? At what age should the study of Latin be begun? (p. 135).

Mowry concluded from his inquiry that there "are three lines of study absolutely essential for the secondary schools. These are: (1) Mathematics, (2) The Natural Sciences, (3) Language and Literature with History, in other words, the Humanities" (p. 136). He added to these Civil Government (local, state, and national) and Intellectual Philosophy, "the philosophy of the mind and mental operations" (p. 136). He organized the high school into two departments or "lines of work," which he called the English Department and the Classical Department.

Reading Mowry today, one finds strong precedent for current criticisms of education such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1987), and Bennett's *Making It Work* (1988). These national diatribes are aimed at the bodies who set curricular requirements; i.e., state legislatures, state departments of education, and, to a lesser extent, local boards of education. These criticisms, particularly of secondary schools, remind us that no modern school principal could really do what Mowry did in New England more than 100 years ago. No contemporary secondary school principal has that kind of authority.

In fact, modern secondary school principals are still accountable. To be accountable, however, they must also be *in control*. Principals today are accountable for delivering a state (and district) defined curriculum embodied in graduation requirements, state and national testing, and various public planning documents. Their control is very diffused—by collective bargaining agreements, judicial rulings on teacher assignment and evaluation, expanded student rights, and parental demands for increased input, as well as by a plethora of local board policies. The secondary school principal is no longer the first among teachers, the "preceptor" of ages past.

Today's principal must execute his or her responsibilities far more subtly, far more collegially, far more collaboratively than predecessors of years ago.

Control today means direction-finding within the limits established by those in higher authority. It still means *within the law*, but there are far more laws today to regulate and guide the principal. More than ever before, control means *shared* decision making—both of the process and of the final decision itself. In short, what principals do today is the subject of intense scrutiny from consumers and critics alike.

Key Tasks in Curriculum

Curriculum is a fairly recent word in the educational vocabulary. Schubert (1980) noted that the first true professional curriculum book was written in 1900. Prior to that time, an educator would look under "instruction" or "organization" to find what was taught in a school. The wider use of graded classes in schools made it necessary to connect individual classes and courses of study into larger, more coherent sequences. Modern curriculum was born.

The function of curriculum is the focusing and connecting of teaching in a school, both to give meaning to what teachers do, and to make teaching and learning more predictable. On this critical function hinges virtually all state testing and school accountability. Public schools are public agencies entrusted with specialized tasks by the state. If schools are not predictable, they cannot be held accountable. If schools are not accountable, requests for public funds cannot be justified. Accountability and predictability are one and the same—the basic keys to retaining public confidence and trust. Only romantics or those who disagree with the aims of public education as a state-controlled and funded enterprise would pose the issue otherwise (Giroux, 1988).

Site-based management initiatives offer real promise to provide principals and school staff members with greater latitude for decision making and expanded responsibility—accountability in the school environment. These initiatives would restore a measure of autonomy and initiative to principals that has long been lost to central administration in many school systems.

The Nature of Curriculum Leadership

Curriculum leadership today is tightly circumscribed, but we do not believe that the principal has been reduced to a mere functionary, an unwilling agent in the state education network. There are fewer options, but options do exist.

The In-House Critic

A near universal criticism of American secondary curriculum is its fragmentation and redundancy (Bennett, 1988). Just as William Mowry (1908) did 100 years ago, principals should raise important questions in schools about *what* should be studied, in *what order*, for *how long*, and for *what purpose*.

Principals must be benign but incisive critics of the status quo. Below are some questions that principals should ask as in-house critics.

Identifying School Purposes

Curriculum leadership starts with very basic questions about educational outcomes, indicators of success, and school purposes.

1. What are the basic educational outcomes that are important for all students in this school? What do we expect of students? Are those expectations in writing? Are they communicated to students and parents? If not, why not?
2. What indicators suggest that we are succeeding with students? What indicators suggest that we are not succeeding? If we have identified the indicators, have we traced them for five or more years? What do the trends tell us? Is the trend line up or down, or is it the same?
3. What is the primary purpose of our school? What should it be? What is the status quo? What do we believe?

Most schools are data rich and information poor. Many principals have access to more data than they know how to process. One school district with five high schools, for example, developed follow-up data on its high school graduates for 10 years. The data showed that nearly one-quarter of the

graduates of one high school were unemployed, while one-quarter went on to college. This strange, bi-modal distribution was unquestioned for years until a new principal raised it with the faculty. That inquiry led to an examination of school tracking decisions and to the creation of more core curriculum classes, fewer early tracking placements, more curriculum alternatives, and a task force on learning style to investigate modes of curriculum delivery.

Schools are not data-driven places. They are driven primarily by custom and tradition. A reflective principal who asks questions about data can be the impetus for real curriculum change.

Establishing Connections

The principal must know how to make the vital connections within a school, to use information positively, to translate ideas into action, and to provide encouragement and motivation. Here are some questions on connections that principals should ask about their schools.

1. How are data on student outcomes linked with the school's curriculum? What are the most sensitive points in the curriculum? Which faculty members are most qualified to examine these pressure points? How should they proceed?
2. How does the schedule of our school advance and/or impede curricular change? What changes in the schedule would help modify the curriculum?
3. Who are the most likely persons to make changes *within* and *across* the curriculum? Are they committed to useful change? How can I enable them to take these actions?
4. Is our written curriculum the curriculum that is actually taught? What processes would have the most positive impact on teachers to improve teaching? How can I get the faculty moving in this direction?

The principal is one of the few people who can see the *whole* curriculum of a school on a daily basis. Too often, principals temporize instead of initiating actions that would lead to change. Curriculum change can occur *within* and/or *across* departments or integrated fields. Change within is considerably easier to initiate than change across departments.

There is no single best action or place to begin making changes. The most successful approach seems to involve a variety of areas simultaneously. Dialog should be ongoing with counselors, department chairs, influential faculty members, librarians, and student body leaders. Principals should look for and help create curricular connections among concepts, ideas, themes, and activities that tie the curriculum together.

The principal should "think small but cumulatively." Curriculum change is dynamic and ongoing, accomplished only by continuous effort. Small but persistent curriculum changes are more apt to endure than the headline-producing reforms that come and go.

Separating Testing from Curriculum Issues

The national craze for testing is increasing. Testing has been around a long time, but test scores may not indicate the actual quality of a school's curriculum.

Testing and education are not synonymous. Better scores do not necessarily mean better education. Higher scores may only mean students are testing better.

Principals should ask these kinds of questions on this issue:

1. What parts of our curriculum do our tests assess? How much of what we test is confined solely to the school curriculum?
2. What part of our curriculum is not tested? Are these parts assessed in other ways? What indicators of quality do we really use to evaluate our curriculum? What connections do we make between these indicators and decisions about program change?
3. If our tests do not assess what we teach or should teach, what use do we make of the results? How do we keep our community from making unwarranted judgments about our school based on testing data?

Testing that is not aligned with or coordinated with a school's curriculum is not an accurate measure of what students have learned, nor is it a factual barometer of the quality of a school's program. National standardized tests measure a very limited portion of any school's formal curriculum. Yet, these scores are often used to make sweeping judgments about the quality of a curriculum. Principals must keep a cool head on this issue.

There will be more rather than less testing in the future. Unfortunately, testing companies have been unable to develop tests that are truly culture, race, or gender-neutral. Testing content is more economically and socially aligned with some subcultures than others. And socioeconomic status continues to be a major source of bias in the assessment of school learning (Gould, 1981).

Principals can be skeptics about tests but not apologists for poor scores. Knowing what tests actually measure is important in helping faculty members as test results fluctuate or drop. Test scores are important if they directly measure the curriculum the community believes all students should learn. Too often, however, scores only measure learning that occurred elsewhere. Any test that warns about the dangers of "teaching to it" cannot be a good measure of the school curriculum. These tests are much more concerned with classifying students than measuring learning (Guskey, 1989).

Principals must avoid being trapped on the testing issue. To test or not to test is a false issue. The issue is what test is most suitable or is best aligned with a given curriculum. Developing options is far more sensible and defensible than trying to avoid testing.

The Master Generalist

No principal can be an expert in every subject area. The principal's expertise in curriculum and restructuring must be that of generalist, one who knows curriculum management and change process *for the entire school.*

Some pertinent questions are as follows:

1. Are special interest groups pressing certain reforms to advance their own positions?
2. Are *balance* and *representation* consistently present in curriculum discussions and decisions in the school?
3. Do I as principal perceive the *entire curriculum* and help reshape it if

it becomes unfocused, unbalanced, unwieldy, or simply irrelevant?

4. Am I clearly the court of last appeal in everyone's mind on *the totality of the curriculum*?

The generalist's contribution to restructuring is critical to success. It is incumbent on principals to energize the role by upgrading their skills, sharpening their vision, reasserting their leadership on schoolwide issues, and becoming masters of the change process. It is to this latter area that we now turn.

The Nature of Change in Education

Change seems to be the only constant in our field. Yet, those with a decade or more of professional experience know that many concepts and issues revisit us. Educational change cycles come and go. If we could get a clear view of how this works, we could explain and predict changes with more confidence.

Strategies of Change

There appear to be two distinct strategies of change: an emergent, developmental strategy that is locally based; and a top-down, centralized strategy that is rational and, of late, politically initiated. Both strategies are valuable and provide different benefits and pitfalls. We need to understand and work with both approaches.

The emergent change strategy is described in the professional literature as a sequence of phases: awareness, exploring, commitment, training, adopting, changeover, adapting, institutionalizing, and renewal (Klausmeier et al., p. 288). This kind of process suits locally initiated and controlled change and innovation. It often involves local action research and evaluation, followed by a search of the literature, foundation contacts, and visits to "lighthouse schools."

Most school systems with commitment to emergent change have developed some kind of a curriculum council, a dialog-decision-action-evaluation process, or a school-based action research process.

The centralized change strategy took on new meaning when the cycle of the early 1970s focused on special education. Specifically, the special education legislation (P.L. 94-142) settled for a long time to come the political-legal pathway to educational change.

Briefly the process played out as follows: Political action groups pressed for federal legislation to identify and provide education for children with special needs as a manifestation of the human rights agenda. A law was passed at the federal level. States (which hold constitutional domain in education) were encouraged by block grants and threats of withholding federal funds to write and pass matching laws. State departments of education wrote the regulations for school compliance.

Local issues prompted litigation and adjudication in the courts to decide what the law and the regulations meant. This litigation phase was very expensive, and many local districts were unable to sustain their positions on such issues as state level standards, or statewide tests. The change directives, however, often gave local districts latitude in course design and delivery.

In top-down change strategy, the phases described in the professional literature seem to be reversed. Change as compliance appears to begin with institutionalization, followed by adaptation to local conditions, changeover, and then teacher training. Adoption is really a ritual formality, and commitment to implement is not personal, but rather corporate and institutional.

School systems that organize themselves for top-down strategy often do not have a curriculum council of wide membership, but only an advisory committee of prominent citizens representing sectors of the community. The committee is likely to be talked at rather than listened to, and is really intended to rally local sector support for the school's agenda. Districts organized this way tend to retain decision making at the central office level and to concentrate on dissemination and supervision work.

Both strategies of change are realistic and have valuable payoffs. Both also have flaws.

The developmental approach tends to be more inclusive, involving persons in decisions and commitment to new programs. Self-renewal and professionalization are facilitated. The climate of the school and emergent leadership are enhanced. A pitfall is that individual schools, already unique in style, tend to become more diverse. Teachers, in some cases, may not have the professional skill or perspective to provide leadership for program implementation. Standard program evaluations become less appropriate. The district focuses on purposes, goals, and policy rather than on design.

The strength of a centralized strategy is support for one theme or focus at every site. Programs must be standardized enough for interchange, common resources, and accountability. The major pitfall is, of course, that local educators may be uninvolved and viewed as only technical implementers. A central design good for everyone may, in fact, not be practical in some or many cases. Eisner and Valance (1975) refer to this as the universality myth: If it is good for anyone, it must be good for everyone.

Principals should ponder change strategies carefully:

1. Both centralized and developmental change strategies are effective, but they have different payoffs and pitfalls. Schools should be organized to pursue both strategies.
2. State level change strategies are becoming the mode for educational improvement. Principals should monitor these developments through their elected state representatives.
3. The teacher's role in change differs according to the strategy that predominates. Centralized strategists tend to see teachers as technical implementers. Developmental strategists talk of teacher leadership and empowerment. Principals must divert this kind of thinking to the appropriate focus: enabling learners, for whom teachers must provide both technical skill and leadership.

Change and Information

Stufflebeam and his colleagues (1971) proposed a model for understanding the relationship between the amount of change desired and the information required to carry out the change. To state his model simply, there are maintenance

required to carry out the change. To state his model simply, there are maintenance situations where change is undesirable, change situations where small steps or improvements are desirable, and change situations where very large measures are desirable. Each situation requires different amounts of information.

Maintenance situations in the operation of the school require stable and ongoing information. Bus schedules, driver replacements, attendance records, class membership, phone calls to parents, individual student schedules, absentee lists, substitute teacher lists, etc., are typical status quo events that demand regularly updated information. Maintaining the status quo is, in a sense, a choice for no change.

Incremental or small-step change usually involves self-improvement strategies. Small changes require much less information to execute because the steps can be adjusted as the program moves along. The process usually begins with the awareness of a need, followed by some sort of goal-setting process, and one or more options initiated through an action plan. Shortly after implementation, a formative evaluation is usually conducted. Perhaps other needs or priorities are identified for additional incremental change.

This is the safest approach to change. It offers schools the opportunity to bring people along slowly and to succeed in small steps. A mistake will not damage the overall program and can be corrected. The primary disadvantage is that the approach may never address deeply rooted or tangential issues or problems.

A very large change or major innovation requires formal strategies of design, validation, dissemination, and implementation. Large-scale innovation demands a great deal of information, from such strategies as study groups, pilot testing, inservice training, and supervisory work. Comprehensive program and school designs (e.g., Paideia, Essential Schools, Montessori, New School) fit this change category, as do program improvements such as Reading Across the Curriculum, Science—A Process Approach, and AIDS Awareness. School restructuring efforts also come under the large-scale model.

Norms of Change

Edward Hall (1959) described behavior and learning in terms of three levels of cultural norms: the formal, the informal, and the technical. He contended that every event has all three dimensions, with one perceived as dominant. Hall's work suggests some important considerations:

1. Formal systems of learning and behavior are the "right ways of doing things." Formal learnings are very stable and satisfy very fundamental needs in persons and organizations. Formal systems are very slow to change. An example would be the role of the teacher as lecturer in the traditional classroom. Change in this kind of behavior is strongly resisted because so much emotion is attached to its learning. The role, once learned, is accepted without question.
2. Informal systems of learning and behavior are acquired by imitation and modeling and function holistically and subconsciously. A teacher's territoriality in the classroom—identifying a room as my classroom—is probably an informal norm. The violation of these norms produces a

nonspecific anxiety because the actual problem is not consciously perceived or understood.

3. Technical systems of learning and change operate at the most conscious and rational level of action. For example, writing a scope and sequence for a learning program is a technical matter. The adoption of a mandated curriculum or a new discipline approach is a technical change. This category of change involves the least emotion. It may trigger reactions at the other levels of behavior, however, and so raise conflict and resistance.

This presents a possible dilemma. A change at the technical level might be perceived by staff members as violating formal or informal cultural norms, stirring up anxiety and resistance to the change that school administrators might dismiss as merely obstinate or uninformed. A team leadership model, for example, can affect different levels of a system: formal, informal, and technical. A leadership model may be technically explained at an inservice conference and displayed on the school organizational chart, but it may not fit the formal way "we do things around here." The informal norms implied in the concept—"my school" versus "our school"—may even raise considerable anxiety on the part of the principal.

Since change involves three levels of awareness, learning, and action, the general strategy proposed by Hall is to identify all three levels in any setting. The description of the formal and informal levels helps raise them to a technical level of understanding where they can be dealt with consciously.

Principals should bear these factors in mind when assessing the information needs and structural norms of a planned change.

- A *top-down* approach to innovation can change behavior for a time but probably will not change related values and meaning.
- *Incremental* change (small steps) takes less information, is more apt to be technical in nature (improve work), and is less apt to violate formal and informal cultural norms.
- A change that can be presented to teachers as *technical* (one that improves their control, or use of time, or makes work easier) will be immediately and widely accepted with a *small* amount of information.
- A change that is perceived by teachers primarily in terms of *informal or formal norms* will be resisted. Change agents must translate the perceptions of such an innovation to the *technical* level using a *developmental* process (small-group interaction and goal setting).

The Context of Change

Contextual dynamics must be understood to manage planned change. Organizational influences on change, the reality level of a proposed or existing program, and community traditions set limiting parameters to any change.

Organizational influences. The number and clarity of goals constitute the first condition that can limit the effect of change in an organization. Schools are very responsive to external demands. They are usually asked to respond to each new social issue as it arises. Planned changes can be subverted, however, by too wide a range of goals and expectations.

Levels of program reality. School programs exist at several levels of reality, according to Charters and Jones (1973). Program reality levels include (1) institutional and staff commitment level, (2) organizational and resource level, (3) staff roles level, (4) learner level, and (5) outcomes level. A program change cannot have any impact on level 5 (outcomes) until all prior levels are implemented. A new program does not exist solely because the board has adopted a resolution. Neither will it have much consequence if no resources are committed to it. If no teacher behaviors are affected, the program is unlikely to influence outcomes. And if learners do not act, behave, or think differently in class, no important outcomes are likely to emerge.

Community and change. The school is the crucible of social values, a microcosm of expectations for the children of the community. Perhaps one-half to two-thirds of the issues that result in community conflict begin with some action related to schools. One reason, of course, is the intense value context of community schools. The other is that schools may be the last vestige of grass roots democracy, the only place where local and individual influence can still make a difference.

Bradley (1985) discusses the potential for community traditions to set limits for curriculum change in a school system. Traditions are informal beliefs held as norms in a community. A planned change that does not consider community traditions is doomed, perhaps accompanied by a big uproar and administrator or board head-rolling. Community traditions are never debated logically, because they are assumed to be true. In fact, they have no alternative side.

This leaves school leaders with two options. The first is to identify community traditions, how firmly they are held, and what program options are compatible with them. The second is to work on raising community traditions to a conscious level and to discuss their effects and consequences. The second option is slow, but may eventually provide a basis for changing a tradition and developing a new school program response. (See Bradley, 1985, for ways to identify community leaders and to accurately assess community traditions and their apparent strengths.)

The following contextual factors are most significant in planning any systematic change in schools.

1. Clear school goals developed in a long-range plan and systematic communication between the school and the community can ensure a strong and less vulnerable change process.
2. The full implementation of a new program can take a minimum of three to five years. Everyone, not just teachers, must be accountable for the implementation. No authentic outcomes are likely until observable changes take place in teacher and learner behavior.
3. The principal's role must be that of change agent—informing, motivating, and leading—if planned changes are to succeed.

Change and the Person

Change is fundamentally a change in people. At the base of curriculum leadership and change are the sense of personal control and the level of motivation of each individual in the school. Individuals differ in their approach to

and tolerance of change.

Personal control is the capability of individuals to make decisions. The lowliest employee of an organization has control in a certain area of the system, and the authority, however limited, to permit or impede access and action by other members of the organization. An entire program can be undermined by one or two persons at any level in an organization. Principals can enhance the success of change efforts by approaching each member of the school as a person with power and need for control.

A second aspect of personal control is that each individual has an agenda for every activity. Personal agendas tend to be multi-leveled. No one has just one reason for an action or decision, and some agenda levels cannot be dealt with directly because they are subconscious. The principal will lead better if he or she knows each person in the organization professionally and personally, and approaches problems of action and change with a sensible understanding of what is important to each person.

People are also driven to action or inaction by personal self-interest. They expect rewards for achievement in the form of recognition and compensation. They may be moved by the risk of failure or loss. They are interested in doing their jobs more effectively and in working more efficiently. They want to find inspiration or fulfillment in their work. Finding personal support, increased skill to be more effective in one's job, and personal achievement are ingredients of success that should be built into any change effort.

Principals should view the following factors as critical in assessing the role of individuals in any change process.

- Principals must support each individual in his or her need for some control and authority in the school. Treating people impersonally can undermine the school climate for constructive change.
- Principals must try to understand the agenda of each person in the school in order to effectively share information and plans.
- Individuals are motivated by the opportunity for success, fear of failure, and hope of reward or recognition. The principal can improve the possibilities of program success by enhancing personal opportunities for successful involvement, diminishing the levels of fear, and recognizing and rewarding people for their efforts.

Restructuring the School as a Process of Change

Restructuring schools means different things to different people. School restructuring is basically a change process that begins with vision making, conceiving what the new school will be. An excellent tool for formulating this vision is a *developmental staging chart*. This chart describes the future school in one column, the school as it exists in another column, and an interim stage in an in-between column. The developmental staging chart thus provides the basis for needs assessment, dialog, and planning.

A sample developmental staging chart is shown in Figure 1. An existing school (called the Custodial School) is described in the left column. The right column describes the Restructured School. The column in the middle characterizes an interim stage in development from a custodial school to a restructured one. The

Figure 1
Developmental Staging Plan for Restructuring a School

Factor	Custodial School	Effective School	Restructured School
Concept base	Scientific management	Effectiveness research	Theory Z; megatrends; information society
Organization	Triangle table of organization; principal apex; teachers at the base	Core of principal and cabinet related to individual teachers	Principal and teacher cabinet linked to teaching teams linked to learners and their parents; school committee of parents and principal; house or school-within-a-school team structure
Communication	One-way; formal faculty meetings and information sharing; principal to individual teacher or parent	One-way directed; leader-initiated plus requested feedback	Two-way vertical for issues and proposals by team, cabinet, individual, and principal; two-way horizontal for job-alike consultation
Decision making	Principal has legal responsibility for decisions; teachers perceived as unable or unwilling to accept decision responsibility	Principal seeks information and advice in making decisions for the school; keeps everyone informed of decisions	Much collaboration; decisions made at implementation level; principal and teachers have a clear view of (1) decisions to be made alone, (2) decisions that require advice and input, (3) decisions that are corporate
Leadership	Authority leader; one role identified	Persuasive leader who teaches, persuades of personal vision; leadership core identified	Transforming leader who creates leadership in others; many roles of leadership identified among participants

Developmental Staging Plan for Restructuring a School

Factor	Custodial School	Effective School	Restructured School
Principal's role	Manager; implements the program efficiently and effectively; style as controller	Instructional leader; expects excellence in teaching, aligned program, and results in achievement; style as controller-problem solver	Entrepreneur; explores new programs, opportunities, recognitions for staff; style as opportunist, supporter-problem solver-cheerleader-controller
Staff selection	Principal or central office interviews and chooses	Screening with research-based selection tools; principal or central office chooses	School committee reviews portfolios; principal reduces pool to acceptable hires, teaching team interviews for working relationship and recommends top choices
Supervision of instruction	Evaluative supervision based on board policy	Clinical supervision and technical development to produce achievement results	Peer observation and consultation; mentoring of new teachers
Teaching	Teaching is telling	Teaching is effective telling; large group and intervention for mastery; technical skill in communication and concept development	Teaching is flexible role of telling, showing, guiding, grouping, intervening, and coaching
Curriculum	Discipline-based; separate fields; textbook-oriented	Objectives-based; separate fields; linear sequenced with mastery outcomes	Multiple bases of objectives, personal and vocational goals, and inquiry; both separate and broad fields; mastery of skills and problem centered; personal and social relevance

Developmental Staging Plan for Restructuring a School

Factor	Custodial School	Effective School	Restructured School
Learner role	Listen, remember, respond, be patient, be on time, stay in school	Listen, be on task, master basics, repeat deficits; demonstrate performance on standardized tests	Have goals, master basics; learn to find, organize, and apply information; inquire solve problems
Home school	Parents show verbal and voting support for schools	Parents hold high expectations for students on homework and achievement; volunteer and support the instructional pro-gram of the school	Parents creat a home environment of high verbal, social, and vocational/professional goals; parents are partner members of learner-teacher-parent team; parents participate in school committee to act on policy and issues facing the school
Finance	District budget determined by past needs for personnel and facilities	Budget priorities established by needs assessment and targets of school effectiveness plan	Site-based budget including personnel options such as differentiated staffing; voucher support determined by parent selection; bonuses in wages and budget based on learning and program outcomes
Accountability	Custodial indicators: e.g., quiet classrooms, orderly movement, polite and responsible behavior; clean facilities and efficient use of funds	School effectiveness indicators: e.g., reduced dropouts, high attendance, and improving standardized test scores; several National Merit semi-finalists and scholarships each year	Learner effectiveness indicators: e.g., mastery skills that are criterion-tested, relating skills, inquiry skills; social/community service participation; career and job goals

interim development here is called the Effective School.

Change process implications. The first outcome of a developmental staging chart such as Figure 1 may be to alarm many stakeholders. Perhaps 90 percent of schools will consider working toward the effective school stage, and only 10 percent will pursue a restructured design.

A second consequence of a developmental staging chart is that the school vision is translated into concrete and explicit factors. Nothing is hidden with poetic or philosophical language. The developmental staging chart is an important tool to stimulate dialog and to involve community members, policymakers, and educators in the strategy of change.

Third, a developmental staging chart illustrates the size of a pending change. The Custodial School in our example represents no change. The Effective School typifies incremental change that is less risky and more controllable. The Restructured School involves systemic change with much risk taking, broad information sharing, and collaborative leadership.

Finally, the developmental staging chart may provide an additional impetus to the change process. It focuses attention on such issues as community traditions and the school, assessment of current practice, alternative models of schooling, needs assessment, priority setting of action goals, strategic planning, and determining of resource needs.

The developmental staging example above illustrates how the restructuring concept can affect the entire school and its organization and program. Restructuring as change process can also be applied to sub-issues such as testing, curriculum clutter, and dropouts. The following scenarios illustrate some of the possibilities.

Scenario 1: "Get those test scores up!"

State and national testing of all sorts is growing. Test scores are becoming the *raison d'être* of secondary education, the ultimate explanation of perceived school quality.

Secondary principals are feeling the squeeze, the reduction of school curriculum to areas tested, the elimination or downgrading of areas not tested, the shrinking of courses in nonacademic areas, and the increase in dropouts as some students react to the limited curriculum and their lack of success in required courses. Many principals have known for some time that increased graduation requirements would not improve the quality of education in schools. Politicians are now discovering what seasoned principals already know: that *more* is not necessarily *better*.

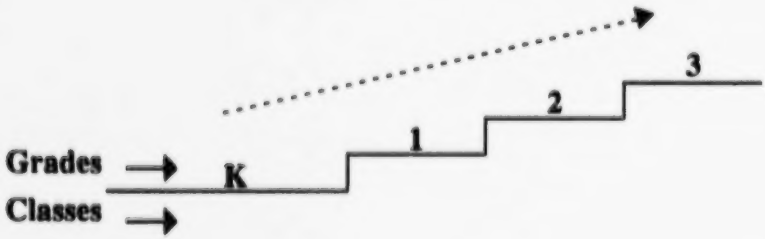
Several problems confront principals in the arena of testing. We will briefly discuss the lack of alignment of most standardized tests with specific school curricula, unacceptable "teaching to the test," and the absence of real accountability in using test scores as measures of cumulative school performance.

Standardized tests do not assess specific local curricula. They are at best *indirect* measures of local success in curriculum development and teaching. The actual alignment of any specific standardized test to any local curriculum is usually unknown. Test makers consistently overestimate alignment in order to sell tests, and they engage in a kind of "doublespeak" on this issue.

They assert that test scores should not be used to assess the quality of any

specific local curriculum. At the same time, they publish results that lead to such comparisons and judgments being made. Because of the low alignment of tests with curricula, the single best predictor of standardized test performance remains the socioeconomic status of students. That brings us to the issue of "teaching to the test."

Figure 2
The Traditional View of the
Secondary School Curriculum—The Metaphor of the Staircase



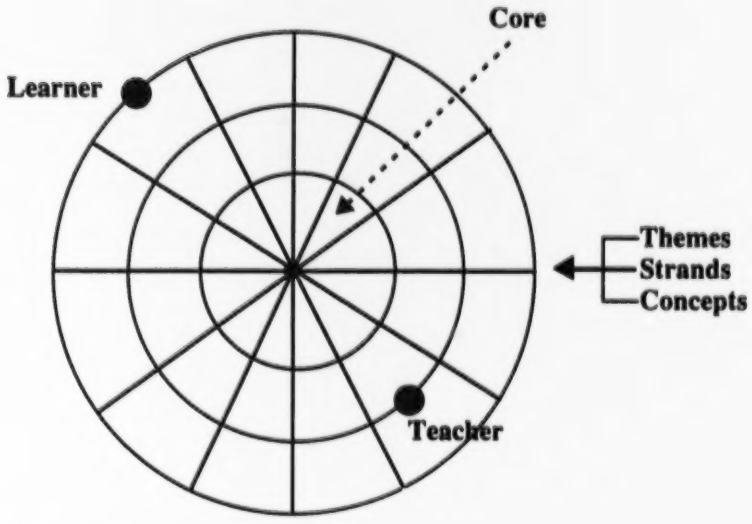
Major Characteristics

- Linear and segmented
- Fragmented
- Logically arranged by perceived level of difficulty (scope and sequence)
- Easily scheduled and evaluated (testing)
- "Balance" is determined prior to implementation, prior to learning occurring or even teaching; subject matter is content-dominated; whatever "adjusting" occurs is a matter of proper motivation and pacing *within and not outside the model*
- Event and sequence accountability are established and maintained

Nothing is wrong with teaching to the test if the test is a valid reflection of the curriculum. This means either establishing the curriculum first and then buying or developing a test (a practice called *frontloading*), or working back from the test to a defensible curriculum (called *backloading*).

Teaching to the test is unacceptable if the purpose of the testing is to classify students. In this circumstance, teaching the tested material results in the misclassification of students. The statistical assumptions of randomness undergird valid standardized testing. Good test norms ensure that at least 50 percent of those taking a test will score *below* the average every time. Test content must be protected (kept secret) to ensure that the material is not taught. Teaching the tested material skews the curve, since student performance is better than expected.

Figure 3
A Nontraditional View
The Model of the Spider Web



Major Characteristics

- Nonlinear
- Cohesive, holistic
- Difficult to standardize and evaluate
- Difficult to schedule
- More psychological than logical
- Balance determined by simple *inclusion* decisions rather than by scope and sequence decisions
- Learner very active in making "sense" of the curriculum
- Teacher more of a partner than controlling agent of the curriculum
- Nature of "accountability" changes; it doesn't matter *when something* is learned, and specific facts don't count

These factors make standardized tests inaccurate measures of school curricula, and near useless tools to restructure curriculum and to improve instruction. Adjusting school curriculum to improve test scores requires precise alignment of the test content to the curriculum. The tighter and less ambiguous this fit, the more teaching will improve test scores; i.e., the less chance teachers will teach something other than the material to be tested.

If tests are to provide feedback for restructuring, they must elicit information

that has bearing on actual curricular decisions to be made at the school level. For this reason, secondary schools are turning to criterion-referenced measures that are truly representative of what students should be learning in the school.

The axiom operating here is that the more students are dependent solely upon the school to acquire the knowledge and skills tested, the more closely the school's curriculum must match the test. Schools in more affluent communities may get by without a focused curriculum by "floating" on their socioeconomic level. Schools in disadvantaged communities must rely on the curriculum to compensate for their disadvantages. Curricular congruence must be much more pronounced in schools serving disadvantaged youngsters than in those serving more typical clientele. At-risk students require an aligned curriculum.

A related testing issue is accountability, or control. Tests assess cumulative behavior. A ninth grade proficiency test in reality assesses what has been learned (or not learned) in grades K-8. A low score on a ninth grade test probably does not point to anything wrong with the curriculum of the ninth grade. Rather, it likely indicates a problem at the sixth, fourth, or even second grade. If a school system uses test data constructively, the number of students in remedial sections should decline over time. The district decreases learner failure by acting upon test information to enhance the curriculum.

A high school principal facing state competency or proficiency testing that measures cumulative learning must establish operational linkages with local elementary and middle level schools to improve the percentage of students passing. *Curriculum articulation* is the issue. The validity of elementary and middle level curricula is the burden of all committed educators.

Scenario 2: Confronting Curriculum Clutter

Secondary principals often must confront a curriculum that resembles a refugee camp. The curriculum is composed of the survivors of successive waves of reform during several decades.

The current secondary school curriculum is a potpourri of legislative mandates, state regulations, passing fads, perceived national crises, court orders, and local initiatives (Tanner, 1986). The contemporary restructuring movement could present a magnificent opportunity to deal with this curriculum clutter. However, two obstacles must be confronted at the outset.

First, there are usually vested interests maintaining the incompatible individual elements of the curriculum. Second, it is futile to search for some internal rationale for inclusion or exclusion. Each wave of reform or change attempted to accomplish different things. Conflicting values often motivated specific curricula of the past.

Most reformers have resorted to inventing external criteria and imposing them on the curriculum. Courses or elements that are not required by the "new model" are candidates for elimination. This approach was taken by Mortimer Adler (1982) in the *Paideia Proposal* and by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987) in *Cultural Literacy*.

Restructuring must do more than fiddle with models or criteria to recast curriculum content. Restructuring must deal with the actual curriculum delivery system, creating useful alternatives that do not now exist. Most contemporary

schools use linear curriculum models that resemble a staircase (Kohl, 1969). (See Figure 2.) The staircase model of curriculum fits neatly into graded schools, traditional schedules, and segmented subjects. Such a curriculum is easily arranged and evaluated by standardized tests that report progress in grade equivalent scores. Testing and alignment are simply a matter of adjusting linear scope and sequence to coincide with testing content and times.

Any curriculum of an interdisciplinary nature tends to unbalance the staircase paradigm or model. Much of NASSP's early Trump plan and the later Model Schools Project were aimed at breaking secondary schools out of a staircase curriculum and recasting around other conceptual alternatives (Trump and Baynham, 1961; Trump, 1977).

Everything in the staircase model reinforces everything else. Grades, schedules, departmentalization, segmented teaching, and testing neatly interlock. Any change that does not move the entire model away from its underlying assumptions is really tinkering instead of reforming. The rhetoric of restructuring schools in the literature today is often very confused on this point. To truly restructure, as opposed to refine, educators must move significantly away from staircase curricular characteristics.

One alternative to the linear curriculum, shown in Figure 3, is the spider web model (also from Kohl, 1969).

The spider web model is a more holistic approach to the design of curriculum. Instead of conceptualizing curriculum as one scope and sequence (matrices and squares in intersecting staircases), this model recognizes the more active role of the learner. It shifts the emphasis from teaching as totally didactic to interactive learning that is sometimes active and sometimes passive. The model conceptualizes curriculum balance as found in the arts, particularly in dance, where it means movement first toward and then away from a partner.

The spider web metaphor has the learner "touch" the curriculum almost everywhere and then be led to its core by a teacher. The curriculum core in this model is not simply unrelated facts and inert "stuff" (Whitehead, 1929), but is related organic wholes structured around organizing points like spokes from a wheel.

The spider web curriculum would require open or block scheduling and an active-passive role for both teachers and students. It would not fit most standardized testing schema or age-graded schools. Teachers would have to be masters of their curricular areas, not simply proficient in specific courses. The curriculum would be considerably less dependent upon textbooks. Assessing learner outcomes would be more difficult than with staircase models. Some of the most sought-after learner outcomes would simply emerge as teachers and students interacted within the web. Grading would be more difficult, because there would be no standardized sequences lending themselves to uniform measures.

In a linear curriculum, individualization usually means taking the learner out of the normal pacing arrangement (sequence) for enrichment or remediation. Eventually, everyone must return to the center (mainstreaming). A factory assembly line metaphor is dominant in this conceptualization. In fact, industrial engineers would call remediating "rework" and the people who do it "the

hidden plant" (English, 1987).

In the spider web curriculum almost all work would be individualized, since no learner would touch the web or curriculum strands at the same time or in exactly the same way. Each learner's path would be distinct and unique within the curriculum. The focus of balance would shift from predetermined, *a priori* knowledge to more emphasis on how learners learn *within* the curriculum. A balanced curriculum would permit the learner to shape and structure activities in the process of learning.

A grass roots process would be required to implement a spider web curriculum. The core might be established by scholars in a discipline or multi-discipline. Teachers would need an intimate understanding of the disciplines to identify the appropriate strands for the web itself. A current example of the application of the spiderweb curriculum is the City Magnet School in Lowell, Mass. (Richmond, 1989).

City Magnet School is organized as a micro-society, with a courtroom, legislative chamber, office space for students, retail shops, a bank, data center, and other replications of the larger community. Students experience the curriculum as a different kind of totality than in a linear school. There is discussion about developing a second micro-society school in Lowell.

Scenario 3: "No more dropouts!"

Reducing the dropout rate in secondary schools has become a national priority. It is estimated that 700,000 youth leave school each year (Sherraden, 1986). The percentage of students completing high school in this country since 1900 has slowly improved, but the percentage of nongraduates among 18-year-olds rose from 24 to 28 percent from 1972 to 1982.

This increase in school dropouts and the focus of attention on the issue follow the cycle of shifts from access for everyone to the demand for higher standards, as Schlesinger described. The earlier shift from equity to excellence as a national priority now shows its painful consequences.

Many solutions have been proposed for the dropout problem. We have prescriptions from regulationists, mechanists, apologists, humanists, work ethicists, academicians, and others.

The regulationists propose laws against dropping out. One state has considered a law limiting the percentage of dropouts a school may have. Another state proposes to punish dropouts by withholding a driver's license from anyone who does not hold a high school graduation certificate. Still other states are (again) considering differentiated diplomas—certificates of different value, including an attendance certificate of which any potential employer might be skeptical.

The mechanists plan to pay students for attendance and grades. The apologists hope to initiate massive efforts to influence the socioeconomic conditions dividing young people. The humanists propose to support and develop student self-concept. The academics search for a common curriculum that every young person in society can study. The work ethicists push for more demanding discipline, more teacher control, and more emphasis on basic subjects, including homework.

Ralph's (1989) information on dropouts challenges our accepted beliefs about the characteristics of these young people. Low grades, for instance, do not make the typical dropout leave school. Minority students at the lowest level of test performance measured in the sophomore year are not the most likely to drop out. Students drop out at all levels of achievement; some have higher literacy skills than do average college graduates.

From the student point of view, dropping out achieves a purpose. It often is the most successful way for a young person to exchange a school game of frustration and defeat for an adult role and relationships. Educators—principals and teachers—must begin to gather information about their own schools and the specific individuals who have dropped out or who may drop out. From this perspective, the problem and its possible solutions are situational and personal.

Four learner and curriculum considerations can and should be brought to bear on the specific needs and real differences among these individuals: motivation and interest, previous learning and experience, practical utility and relevance, and learning style. The outcome we seek is not reducing dropouts as a managerial statistic, but supporting and preparing young people for life.

Interviewing dropouts and stay-ins of similar age, grade level, achievement, school grades, and attendance has been helpful in understanding the problem. In a recent study (Gastright and Ahmad, 1988), dropouts were two-and-one-half times more likely than stay-ins to report the "teacher/principal had it in for me." Stay-ins also seemed to have more difficulty getting a part-time job.

The dropout problem is complex. Each person has different personal, school-related, and work-related reasons for his or her decisions and actions. No general dropout program fits all. Each school must find a way to respond to students' personal and individual reasons for wanting to leave. Only then can intervention and support be helpful to individuals.

Summary

Restructuring the curriculum of secondary schools is more than rearranging the existing courses into new strands or clusters. The current curriculum is the result of many years of adding often unrelated topics and courses based on differing values. Restructuring the curriculum will require a bold response, one that moves beyond traditional models to real systemic change.

The principal brings the special expertise of a *generalist* to this task. A generalist raises important questions about the totality of the curriculum, what it does, and what it should do. The time has long passed when principals alone determined how the curriculum should be shaped. Principals still must think about the totality of curriculum, but the many pressures and forces at work in schools now mean that teachers, parents, students, courts, and politicians all are more active in defining curriculum.

Restructuring involves abandoning some metaphors of structure (such as the staircase curriculum) and considering alternatives. One alternative presented in this publication is a spider web model that would require real structural changes in time/space relationships, scheduling approaches, and teaching practices.

The principal is still the prime catalyst in bringing parties together for

it is more collegial and collaborative. In the accountability arena, however, the principal still stands alone. It is likely to remain that way for a long time.

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